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ABSTRACT

The National Center for Family Literacy (FCFL) began the Family Independence Initiative (FII) to address the needs of welfare recipients and their families for literacy services. During the FII's development phase in 1997-1998, NCFL funded five family literacy program grantees to develop models of work-focused family literacy services. To satisfy welfare requirements, the grantees ensured that the onsite family literacy services offered were central to developing participants' basic and work preparedness skills, and they infused career awareness and work preparedness activities in the adult education, parent time, and early childhood component of services. Based on the lessons learned in the development phase, NCFL implemented a pilot phase (1998-2000) in which 11 grantees in 6 cities were funded. The pilot phase established the importance of the following elements to program success: (1) a solid organizational infrastructure; (2) identification of target populations so that core program components can be tailored to them; (3) internal program coordination and coordination with other agencies; (4) adequate time for the planning and coordination that are critical to successful integration of curricular activities; and (5) technical assistance in areas such as developing core services and collecting and interpreting data. A follow-up study of FII participants is planned in order to understand the FII's long-term outcomes. (MN)

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Abt Associates Inc.

Family Independence Initiative (FII): Lessons Learned about Developing and Delivering Family Literacy Services to Welfare Recipients

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Executive Summary

Overview of the Family Independence Initiative

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) began the Family Independence Initiative (FII) to address the needs of welfare recipients and their families who might benefit from participating in family literacy services. With funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, NCFL developed a grants program during 1997-2000 to determine the ways in which family literacy programs could adapt their services to assist current and recent welfare recipients and their families in becoming economically independent.

The Family Independence Initiative had two phases of activities. During the Development phase (1997-1998), NCFL funded five family literacy program grantees to develop models of work-focused family literacy services. These grantees met with their local welfare offices in recruiting participants and in determining the conditions under which welfare recipients could receive family literacy services while meeting the requirements of welfare reform. They also modified three key elements of a family literacy program in serving welfare recipients: the amount of time for services, the content of services, and the processes for delivery services. Because welfare reform required that recipients participate in a work experience or hold a job, the amount of time that participants could spend in onsite program services was reduced. Thus the grantees had to ensure that the onsite services they offered were central to developing participants' basic and work preparedness skills. They also infused career awareness and work preparedness activities in the adult education, parent time, and early childhood components of services. By offering participants opportunities to learn about work through job shadowing, mentoring, and work experience, the grantees broadened the processes they used to deliver services to include offsite activities. They also expanded their collaborating partners to include business, industry, and often the welfare agency itself. By the end of the Development phase, NCFL had a blueprint for delivering family literacy services in the context of welfare reform.

Based on the lessons learned from the Development phase, NCFL carried out a Pilot phase (1998-2000) in which 11 grantees in six cities supported by the Knight Foundation were funded. The goal of the Pilot phase was to test further the efficacy of using family literacy services to assist adults in developing their skills to obtain and retain employment, as well as in facilitating the academic and social development of their children. The lessons learned from the experiences of the Pilot programs are presented in this report.

Abt Associates' Process Study

During the Development phase of FII, Abt Associates conducted case studies of the five grantees to understand the activities that they were undertaking in creating work-

focused family literacy services. To build upon this work, NCFL commissioned Abt Associates to continue their FII process study in working with the Pilot programs. The objectives of the Pilot phase process study were to:

- Document the types of adaptations that family literacy programs must make to serve welfare recipients and adults transitioning to work;
- Identify the factors that facilitate and impede the adaptation process; and
- Develop recommendations concerning the utility of family literacy as a mechanism for enabling welfare recipients to be economically independent and productive family members.

Abt Associates' team developed an approach to the process study of the FII Pilot programs in which the team collected data about: a) the overall design of the FII, b) the extent to which the programs selected for the Pilot phase were able to build upon a base of family literacy services that could be adapted for welfare clients, and c) the key factors that affected the capacity of the Pilot programs to work with welfare clients. The data collection methodology for the process study was comprised of the following activities:

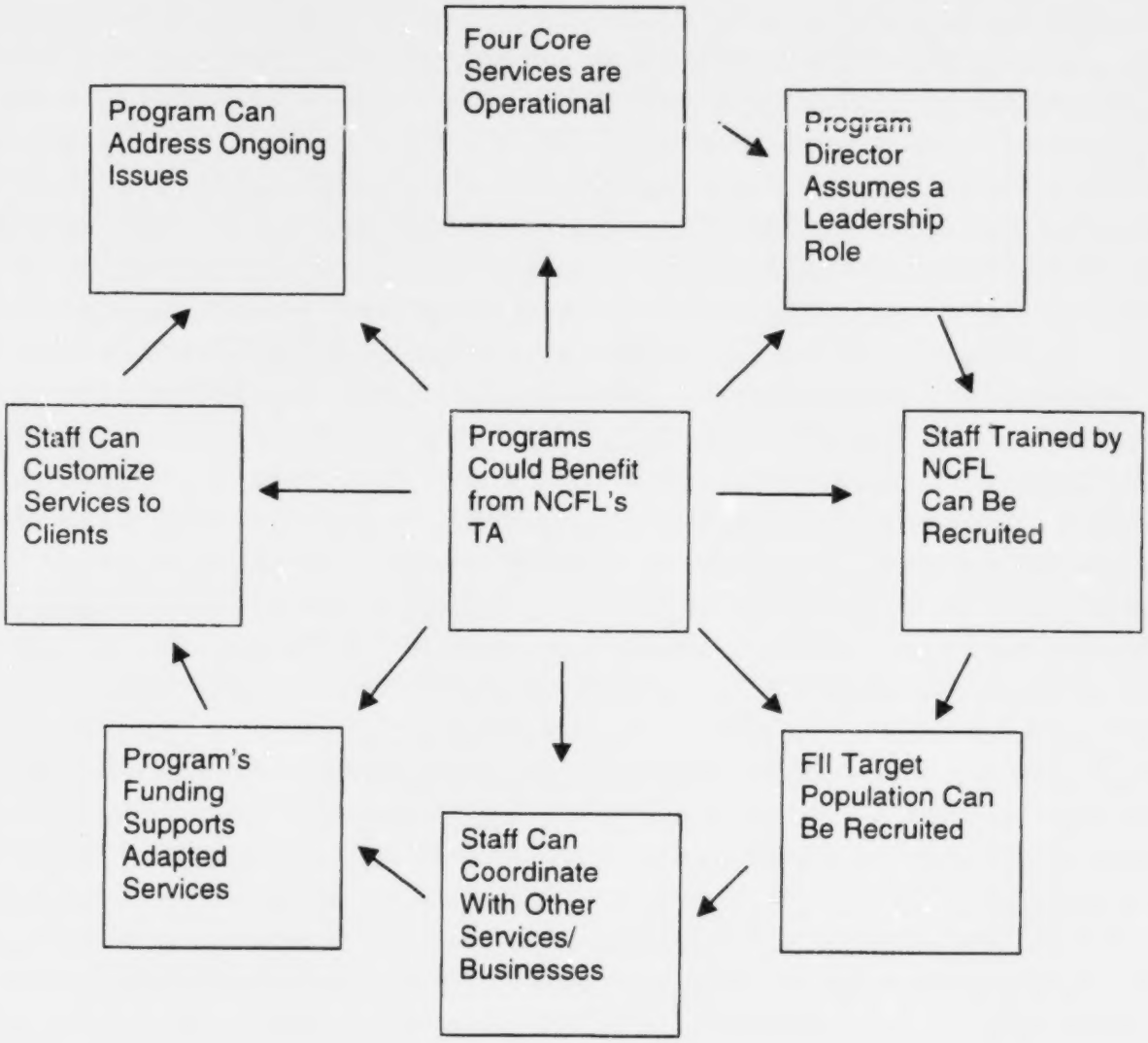
- Three site visits to each of the 11 programs during Years 1 and 2 of the Pilot phase, which included individual interviews with key staff, observation of program services, and review of program documents;
- Review of NCFL's documentation of the technical assistance that they provided to the Pilot programs;
- Participation in annual Pilot program meetings; and
- Review of the participant data that the Pilot programs submitted to NCFL.

The study team analyzed the data to determine the factors affecting the programs' implementation of family literacy services that were unique to the programs based on their organizational infrastructure, the clients served, and the available resources for services. The team then determined the issues that were common across the programs, and used the results of this analysis in formulating recommendations for this report.

FII Guiding Assumptions and Pilot Program Grantees

Guiding Assumptions. In selecting the Pilot grantees, NCFL staff made a number of assumptions about the organizational capacity of the Pilot programs, their resources, and their ability to deliver services. These assumptions are presented in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1. Assumptions Guiding the FII Implementation Model


Four Core Services are Operational
Program Can Address Ongoing Issues
Program Director Assumes a Leadership Role
Staff Can Customize Services to Clients
Programs Could Benefit from NCFL's TA
Staff Trained by NCFL Can Be Recruited
Program's Funding Supports Adapted Services
Staff Can Coordinate With Other Services/ Businesses
FII Target Population Can Be Recruited

Three of these assumptions were incorporated in the criteria that NCFL used in choosing the Pilot programs:

- The existence of the four core family literacy services (adult education, parent time, early childhood education, and parent and child time – PACT);
- The availability of welfare recipients who could participate in a family literacy program; and
- Sufficient program funding to support the required services.

Other assumptions guiding the FII program implementation concerned the capacity of the Pilot program staff to provide leadership, implement and adapt comprehensive family literacy services, as well as work with collaborating agencies in delivering these services. It also was assumed that the Pilot programs would require technical assistance in strengthening their family literacy services, in expanding their activities to incorporate work preparation and work experience, and in collaborating with other agencies. In carrying out the Pilot process study, Abt Associates' team examined each of these assumptions in terms of the challenges they posed to the Pilot programs and the ways in which these programs addressed the challenges.

Pilot Programs. NCFL funded 10 Pilot programs in five cities that represented a variety of fiscal agents and service delivery models. An eleventh Pilot program in a sixth city was a Development site that NCFL funded to carry out additional post-employment services for participants and to assist with technical assistance for the 10 new programs. An overview of the Pilot programs is presented in Exhibit 2. In their selection process, NCFL chose programs that represented a variety of organizational and fiscal arrangements for delivering family literacy services to welfare recipients.

Pilot Participants. The FII Pilot programs intended to enroll families for at least one year of service. Over the two years of the Pilot phase, a total of 396 adults were served across the 10 FII programs. Eleven percent of the participants from Year 1 returned for a second year of service.

Technical Assistance to Pilot Programs

A key activity that facilitated the work of the FII Pilot programs was the technical assistance that NCFL staff delivered. The staff visited each program at least twice during each of the two years of the Pilot phase. The format for the visits consisted of an observation-feedback-management cycle of activities where NCFL staff observed some aspect of the programs' activities, provided feedback to the program staff on what they had observed, and conducted a discussion about key management activities. During some of the visits, NCFL staff or their representatives conducted workshops designed to assist Pilot staff in strengthening their practices related to delivering one of the core services or adapting components of services. In between the visits, NCFL staff held

Exhibit 2. FII Pilot Program New Grantees

Program City, Number of FII Pilot Sites	Fiscal Agent	FII Pilot Sites/Provider Agencies/Service Locations
Akron OH: Two FII Pilot programs	Akron Vocational School (AVS), Akron Public Schools	▪ Akron Vocational School (AVS) in collaboration with Barrett Elementary School in Year 1, with a Head Start program in Year 2 ▪ Decker Family Development Center (a partnership of Barberton City Schools, Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron, and the University of Akron) providing all components of family literacy services
Boulder CO: Two FII Pilot programs	Family Resource Schools (FRS) Program, City of Boulder, Division of Children, Youth, and Families	▪ Columbine Elementary School in collaboration with Boulder Public Library ▪ Family Learning Center providing all components of family literacy services
Charlotte NC: Three FII Pilot programs	Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)	FII was implemented in three service locations (two locations each year) that were part of the Even Start collaborative between CPCC and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools
Long Beach CA: Two FII Pilot programs with a coordinating agency	Long Beach Unified School District	FII was implemented in two organizations coordinated by Long Beach Service Delivery Area, One Stop Career Center: ▪ Burnett Elementary School (an Even Start program site) ▪ Long Beach Adult School
Philadelphia PA: Three FII Pilot programs with a coordinating agency	Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL), City of Philadelphia	FII was implemented in three separate organizations coordinated by the MCOL: ▪ Congreso de Latinos Unidos in collaboration with Fairhill Elementary School ▪ The Center for Literacy in collaboration with Hill Elementary School (an Even Start program site) ▪ Lutheran Settlement House in collaboration with Hunter Elementary School

numerous telephone conferences with Pilot program staff, communicated with Pilot program staff via email, and met with staff at family literacy conferences. NCFL also convened the Pilot program staff during the summers of 1999 and 2000 to review the year's activities, discuss the challenges they had encountered, and plan for the next year. NCFL staff also trained Pilot staff to collect demographic and outcome data, and provided feedback to the programs on the data that they submitted to NCFL. While all Pilot programs submitted data to NCFL, the response rates were low for the submission of complete data sets.

Strategies for Addressing Implementation Challenges

Our analysis of the Pilot programs' activities revealed three overarching factors that were critical to their implementation of family literacy services:

- The Pilot programs' organizational infrastructure;
- Coordination within family literacy program components and between the program and external organizations; and
- Integration of workforce preparation content within the adult education and parent time components of a family literacy program, as well as content integration across program components of early childhood education, parent time, and PACT.

The Pilot programs undertook a variety of activities to address these factors. While Pilot programs differed in the extent to which they had existing family literacy services, they all had to strengthen their organizational infrastructure and leadership capacity. This presence of an infrastructure was important in securing staff and space for services, recruiting the target population, and organizing fiscal resources to support the required services. The Pilot programs also developed relationships with services within their organizations as well as with external entities to expand the range of activities that they could offer participants. These included support services to address the variety of personal challenges that participants had to address, as well as other components of core family literacy services that had to be added to programs. Finally, the Pilot programs made progress in integrating workforce content into the adult education instruction, in providing a range of work-preparation services, and in including job-seeking and job-keeping issues in parent time. They also made efforts to align the content and activities of the family literacy components and to integrate family issues across components. The experiences of the pilot programs provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges that family literacy programs must address in serving adults transitioning from welfare to work, as well as a variety of strategies that can be used to meet these challenges.

Lessons Learned from FII

The results of our study point to a number of lessons about the process of developing work-focused family literacy services. These findings also provide insights about the structure of the services that these clients must have in order to move toward economic self-sufficiency.

Organizational Infrastructure. The FII programs' experiences in organizing the components of a family literacy service demonstrate the importance of developing a solid organizational infrastructure. Fundamental to the operational of a program are: administrative leadership, qualified staff, adequate facilities, the availability of the target population of clients who are to be served, adequate fiscal resources, and an

understanding of the services that are to be delivered. Two lessons from the Pilot programs' experiences regarding infrastructure are:

- A complex intervention such as family literacy cannot thrive on a weak organizational base. Early in the development of a program, key administrators must understand the rationale and operational requirements of the program and attend to the core components of the service such as staff, facilities, and funding. Once these components are established, they must be routinely monitored and reinforced; and

- It is important to identify the populations of clients who are to be served so that services can be targeted to meet the specific needs of these clients. In developing a family literacy program aimed at a specific client population, the availability of this population needs to be confirmed and the particular service needs should be delineated. For family literacy programs focusing on adults who are transitioning from welfare to work, the extent of their prior work experience and their disposition toward work are important characteristics to consider in developing services.

Program Coordination. A key requirement of a successful family literacy program is the staffs' capacity to coordinate services within the program and with external agencies and organizations. The main premise underlying family literacy is that there is value-added from different components of service working together to address the educational and social needs of the family. The FII programs faced many challenges in coordinating services, and their experiences indicated the following:

- More specific training in developing and sustaining relationships with organizations may be needed. Family literacy staff need guidance on processes for working with other agencies that include: identifying a common goal, specifying the strengths that each entity brings to the relationship, developing ways of monitoring the relationship, and resolving difficulties that arise in the relationship;

- Family literacy staff need assistance in identifying the types of incentives that the primary service can offer to collaborating service partners to keep them engaged in the collaboration, such as the types of data that can be shared, the expanded services that will be available to clients, and successes that can be celebrated; and

- In coordinating the delivery of work preparation services with external agencies, it is important that staff have a strategy for identifying clients who are ready to participate in activities involving business and training partners. The appropriate placement of clients in work preparation activities will ensure a successful learning experience for the client and an ongoing relationship with business and training partners.

Integration of Services. The main focus of FII programs' work in integrating services was their incorporation of work preparation activities in the adult education and parent time components. The lessons learned from their experiences are:

- Integration of curricular activities requires that staff have time to plan their activities, meet with colleagues, and understand the overall instructional content of family literacy. These requirements need to be recognized by the program's administrators and negotiated in the development of the components of service;

- It is critical that staff understand the underlying skills that are being taught through work preparation activities in order to integrate them as part of adult basic skills instruction. The use of work-related applications in teaching basic skills is most effective when the applications are appropriate for the level of skill being taught; and

- In implementing a new model such as work-focused family literacy, it may be helpful if program staff consider strengthening the content and processes of each individual component of family literacy before moving toward integration across components. Once components of service are organized and the content has been defined, staff may be better able to work together in integrating the content and activities to solidify the overall program.

Overall Family Independence Initiative. Our analyses revealed a number of insights about the development and delivery of family literacy services as well as the implementation of an initiative or demonstration program with multiple grantees. These data suggest the following recommendations:

- Programs with some experience in delivering selected components of family literacy service may require training that takes into account the programs' prior experience, and assists staff in developing a common understanding of the activities involved in a comprehensive family literacy program with integrated components of service;

- Technical assistance is critical when programs do not have all of the core family literacy services in place, need to build infrastructure and staff, or are not experienced in coordinating with staff within their own organization or with other agencies. The technical assistance needs to reinforce the key principles of family literacy programs, recognize and address the difficulty of implementing multiple program changes, and should be delivered throughout the period of the initiative;

- The process of simultaneous personal change may be too difficult for families to undertake who have to address multiple barriers to participation, such as personal, social, economic, and educational issues. Family literacy services to these families may need to be sequenced so that families can develop some stability in personal and social issues before participating fully in all education and parenting services. The length of time that families participate in these services may need to be increased to enable them to benefit fully from a comprehensive array of services; and

- Family literacy programs need additional guidance regarding the data collection, interpretation, and use of program and participant data. Staff in these programs generally are not using data to manage the services that they deliver or to reinforce

the participation of the clients whom they serve. Additional training and technical assistance could assist staff in developing ownership of the data, which should result in improving their collection and use of data.

Next Steps

One goal of our process study was to assess the utility of family literacy as a mechanism for enabling welfare recipients to be economically independent and productive family members. This question can be addressed from two perspectives: 1) the feasibility of developing a comprehensive family literacy service that serves welfare recipients or adults transitioning to work, and 2) the extent to which participation in family literacy services is beneficial to welfare recipients.

Development of Family Literacy Services. Our report has provided evidence that it is feasible to develop comprehensive family literacy services for welfare recipients, but that this process takes time, an organizational infrastructure, and a knowledgeable and committed staff. The FII Pilot programs persisted in organizing services that would meet the requirements of a comprehensive model of family literacy and that could address the multiple needs that participants brought to these programs. In undertaking these activities, however, the Pilot program staff found that the process took longer than they had anticipated and required a number of attempts to accomplish what they intended. The FII programs also worked hard to recruit, train, and retain staff who had the skills and knowledge to deliver the varied content of family literacy services. A key challenge that the Pilot staff faced in delivering these services was meeting welfare recipients' multiple needs. At the time of their enrollment in the FII program, many recipients had personal issues that they had to resolve that would pose barriers to both their participation in the program and to employment if not addressed. Some recipients also had low levels of English literacy and basic skills, which would require a significant instructional intervention in order for them to earn a living wage. The range of FII participants' needs at the time of their entry into the program meant that FII staff had to:

- Develop partners that would provide a variety of non-educational services;
- Sequence the delivery of family literacy services so that participants could manage the multi-component intervention; and
- Schedule sufficient time for the delivery of services to meet participants' needs.

Because family literacy is a complex intervention and adults transitioning from welfare to work bring a variety of personal and skill issues to programs, organizations that wish to develop a work-focused family literacy program may need to plan sufficient time and resources to configure each component of service. They also need to consider the particular needs of their target population in scheduling activities and in establishing community and business partners. When these conditions are in place, family literacy is

a viable service for adults who would like to enhance their skills as workers and as parents.

Benefits to Welfare Recipients. It is too early to determine the overall the benefits to welfare recipients who participated in the FII work-focused family literacy programs. The assumption underlying family literacy is that family members will make a number of changes as a result of participating in a family literacy program. Because of the challenges that adults face in making personal changes, it is reasonable to expect that such change would take time. The data that NCFL was able to gather from the FII programs provided a preliminary understanding about the personal and educational benefits that participants can receive by attending a program.

The near-term data that NCFL collected on FII participants indicated that approximately half of the adults who were assessed improved their basic skills. A number of FII participants also reported that they engaged in educational activities with their children and that participation in FII aided them in preparing for work. As the quality of the data collected by family literacy programs improves, it will be more feasible to determine the overall short-term outcomes for participants.

To address the limitations in the FII participant data collection and to understand the long-term outcomes for FII participants, Abt Associates, with support from NCFL, will conduct a follow-up study of the FII participants who received services during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 program years. Data will be collected from these FII participants one year from the end of each service year. The intent of the follow-up study is to examine the long-term outcomes for FII participants with regard to their employment, development of basic skills, and activities as parents and teachers of their children. The follow-up study will enable us to develop an understanding of families' experiences in using the assistance that they received from the FII programs and the improvements that they were able to make as a result of participation in a comprehensive family literacy program. The results from the follow-up study also will provide insight into participants' perceptions about the value of family literacy as a catalyst for personal and family change.

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I. Introduction

The Context of Welfare Reform

Welfare reform has posed challenges to educational and social programs serving economically and educationally disadvantaged adults and their children. With the intent of promoting work over welfare and self-reliance over dependency, the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 has changed the delivery of education and job training services to welfare recipients. One premise underlying this legislation was that recipients' participation in work experience is the critical element in preparing them for sustained employment. This was a movement from the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program, under the Family Support Act (Public Law 100-485), where education was considered an important service in preparing welfare recipients for work. This shift in emphasis on the role of educational services as a pivotal link to self-sufficiency has meant that education service providers are adjusting the services that they provide to meet the varying requirements for recipients participating in education under TANF. These modifications have included an expansion of the content of the services for adults to include job readiness and work experience, as well as changes in the amount of time for services.

While the regulations guiding welfare reform have implications for the delivery of education and training services to welfare recipients generally, this "work first" approach in particular has affected family literacy programs offering comprehensive services. These programs typically provide four components of educational services over several hours a week, including adult education, early childhood education, parent time, and parent and child time (PACT). Under TANF, family literacy programs have had to change the amount of time that adults can participate in the multiple service components as well as the location where services are provided. The programs also have had to incorporate work preparation and work experience into the adult education component of services. The challenge for family literacy programs has been to provide quality comprehensive services under the new conditions prompted by welfare reform.

The Family Independence Initiative

As states formulated their welfare policies in response to the new legislation, the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) began an initiative to promote the delivery of family literacy services in the context of welfare reform. With funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, NCFL designed the Family Independence Initiative (FII) to determine the ways in which family literacy programs can assist current and recent welfare recipients and their families in becoming economically independent. This three-year project (1997-2000) had two phases of activities: the Development phase and the Pilot phase.

Development Phase. During the Development phase of the FII (1997-1998), NCFL funded five family literacy programs serving welfare recipients to assist them in refining their services to address the regulations under welfare reform concerning recipients' participation in work and education. These Development sites were among the first family literacy programs to test the ways in which comprehensive family literacy services would need to be adapted to meet the requirements of welfare reform.

During this phase, NCFL commissioned Abt Associates Inc. to conduct case studies of the five Development sites. Abt Associates' case study report (Alamprese & Voight, 1998) documents the ways in which these sites worked with welfare offices and adjusted their services so that welfare recipients could continue to participate in a family literacy program while meeting the new welfare requirements. The Development sites indicated that they modified three key elements of a family literacy program in serving welfare recipients: the amount of time for services, the processes used in delivering services, and the content of services. Because welfare reform requires that recipients participate in a work experience or hold a job, the amount of time that participants could spend in onsite program services was reduced along with the ways in which time was used. Hence, the family literacy staff had to ensure that the onsite services that they offered were central to developing participants' basic and work preparedness skills. They also had to supplement onsite activities with offsite events that expanded and reinforced participants' learning.

The main content change the Development sites' staff made in their services was in the topics addressed in the adult education and other components. These staff infused career awareness and work preparedness activities in adult education as well as in the early childhood and parenting services. The staff also taught basic skills in the context of work, while addressing job awareness and job keeping skills in the workplace. By offering opportunities for participants to learn about work through job shadowing, mentoring, and work experience, the family literacy programs broadened the processes they used to deliver services to include offsite activities. They also expanded their collaborating partners to include business, industry, and often the welfare agency itself.

Pilot Phase. Using the lessons learned from the experiences of the Development sites, NCFL funded 11 programs in six cities as FII Pilot programs for two years (1998-2000). Ten of these were new FII programs and the eleventh was one of the Development sites that received expansion funding. The goal of the Pilot programs was to examine further the efficacy of the process of using family literacy services to assist welfare recipients in developing their skills to obtain and retain employment, as well as in facilitating the academic and social development of their children.

The Pilot Phase Process Study

Objectives. The Pilot programs, located in a variety of organizations and representing different service configurations, provided a further test of the role of family literacy in

serving welfare recipient families and in assisting adults to transition from welfare to work. To build upon the work undertaken with the five Development sites, NCFL commissioned Abt Associates to continue their FII process study activities in working with the Pilot programs. The objectives of the Pilot phase process study were to:

- Document the types of adaptations that family literacy programs must make to serve welfare recipients and adults transitioning to work;

- Identify the factors that facilitate and impede the adaptation process; and

- Develop recommendations concerning the utility of family literacy as a mechanism for enabling welfare recipients to be economically independent and productive family members.

Approach and Methods. Abt Associates' study team developed an approach to the process study of the Pilot programs that would enable the team to collect data about: a) the overall design of the Family Independence Initiative, b) the extent to which the programs that were selected for the Pilot phase were able to build upon a base of family literacy services that could be adapted for welfare clients, and c) the key factors that affected the capacity of the Pilot programs to work with welfare clients. This approach consisted of the following:

- An examination of the extent to which the Family Independence Initiative's guiding assumptions were supported. Since NCFL made a number of assumptions about the capacity and activities of the family literacy programs at the time they became involved in the FII Pilot phase, it was important to examine whether these assumptions held over time;

- A focus on organizational-level activities rather than participants' outcomes. The intent of the process study was to understand the Pilot programs' capacity to develop and carry out services. This required a focus on the infrastructure of the programs, including the operational features, strengths, and limitations of the organization and staff delivering the family literacy services. While Abt Associates collected organizational-level data, NCFL staff worked with the Pilot programs in gathering participant data that Abt Associates' study team reviewed as part of the process study;

- An examination of the role of simultaneous change in individuals and organizations. Central to the concept of family literacy are the assumptions that: a) families have multiple needs, b) a program can deliver multiple services simultaneously to address these needs, and c) that program families can benefit from participating in these services. The process study sought to understand whether these assumptions were valid, as well as to illuminate some of the processes in family literacy programs that have not been examined well in the research on family literacy; and

- A review of the role of technical assistance in facilitating the Pilot programs' activities. A key feature of the FII has been the technical assistance that NCFL staff have provided to the Pilot programs. In developing a model for family literacy programs serving welfare recipients, the NCFL wanted to understand the extent to which the provision of technical assistance is a critical component of the model.

The data collection methodology for the process study involved the following activities:

- Site visits to the 11 programs in six cities during years 1 and 2 of the Pilot phase, which included individual interviews with key staff, observation of program services, and review of program documents. The following types of data were collected about the operation of the FII family literacy program during the site visits: administrative structure, fiscal management, staffing, activities for each of the core family literacy services, coordination among program services, interagency partnerships, and data collection and reporting;

- Review of NCFL's documentation of the technical assistance that they provided to the Pilot programs;

- Discussions with NCFL staff regarding the progress of the FII Pilot programs;

- Participation in annual Pilot program meetings; and

- Review of the participant data that the Pilot programs submitted to NCFL.

The study team analyzed the data collected through the various methods to determine the factors affecting the programs' implementation of family literacy services that were unique to the programs based on their organizational infrastructure, the clients served, and the available resources for services. The team then determined the issues that were relevant across the programs, and used the results of this analysis in formulating recommendations for this report.

The Process Study Report

This report presents the findings from Abt Associates' process study of the FII Pilot programs. Section II discusses the assumptions that guided the FII initiative and the characteristics of the Pilot programs and their participants. Presented in Section III are the challenges that the Pilot programs addressed in adapting family literacy services for welfare recipients and the strategies that they used to meet these challenges. Section IV contains the lessons learned from the Pilot programs and recommendations for delivering family literacy services in the context of welfare reform.

II. Overview of the FII Guiding Assumptions and Pilot Sites

The FII Guiding Assumptions

In establishing the FII, NCFL intended to develop a model for demonstrating how family literacy programs can be effective mechanisms for assisting welfare recipients in becoming economically dependent and productive family members. When NCFL funded the five Development sites in 1997, they selected programs that had: a) established family literacy services, b) welfare recipients as their clients, and c) staff who had begun to modify their services to address welfare reform's regulations. The NCFL staff gave broad guidance to the Development sites at the beginning of the grant period and provided ongoing technical assistance throughout the year.

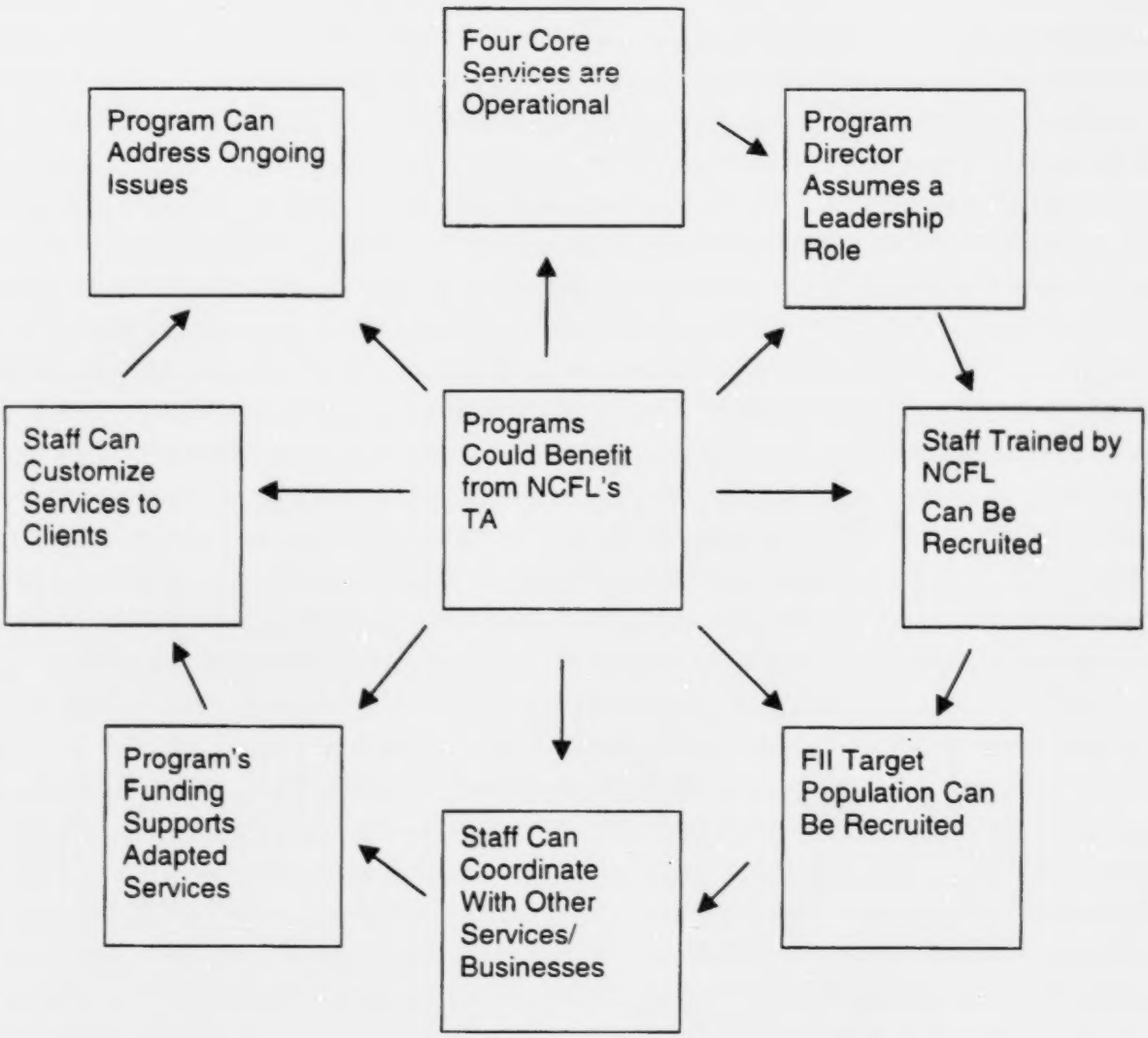
Based on the lessons learned from the Development phase, NCFL developed an RFP for the Pilot phase of FII that specified the key activities that a Pilot program would be expected to undertake. As was the case with the Development sites, NCFL intended to fund as Pilot programs existing family literacy programs offering the four components of service. They also expected that the Pilot programs would require technical assistance in adapting their service for welfare recipients. Eligible recipients for the FII Pilot grants were organizations in the 26 communities supported by the Knight Foundation.

The NCFL carried out a multi-step process in selecting the Pilot programs that involved: the review of 23 written proposals, a phone conference with candidate programs, and a site visit to each final candidate. Based on the results of this process, NCFL funded 10 Pilot programs with family literacy services that had the potential of serving welfare recipients. (In Boulder, the intent also was to develop and strengthen their family literacy services.) The Pilot programs' participation in FII began with an orientation workshop for coordinators followed by implementation training for all staff. After the training, NCFL staff provided technical assistance through site visits and telephone conferences during the two-year Pilot phase. The extent of the technical assistance that NCFL staff provided is discussed later in this report.

In selecting the Pilot grantees, NCFL staff made a number of assumptions about the organizational capacity of the Pilot programs, their resources, and their ability to deliver services. These assumptions are presented in Exhibit 1. Three of these assumptions were incorporated in the criteria that NCFL used in choosing the Pilot programs:

- The existence of the four core family literacy services;
- The availability of welfare recipients who would participate in a family literacy program; and

Exhibit 1. Assumptions Guiding the FII Implementation Model


Four Core Services are Operational
Program Director Assumes a Leadership Role
Staff Trained by NCFL Can Be Recruited
FII Target Population Can Be Recruited
Staff Can Coordinate With Other Services/ Businesses
Program's Funding Supports Adapted Services
Staff Can Customize Services to Clients
Program Can Address Ongoing Issues
Programs Could Benefit from NCFL's TA

- Sufficient program funding to support the required services.

The NCFL staff screened the Pilot programs for these characteristics during the grantee selection process. Since one purpose of the FII was to determine the extent to which family literacy programs could adapt their services to address welfare recipients' needs, it was expected that the Pilot programs would begin with a core set of services that they could adjust. Furthermore, it was essential that there were welfare recipients in the communities served by the Pilot programs who would be willing to participate in family literacy. Also, the FII funding that NCFL gave to the programs was predicated on the fact that the program was operating from a base of family literacy services, and that the FII monies would be leveraged with a program's other funding sources.

Other assumptions guiding the FII Pilot program implementation concerned the capacity of the Pilot program staff to provide leadership, implement and adapt comprehensive family literacy services, as well as work with collaborating agencies in delivering these services. These assumptions were implied in the FII implementation model and were critical to test in determining the viability of family literacy services in serving welfare recipients.

A final assumption that NCFL made in planning the FII Pilot phase was that the programs would require technical assistance in strengthening their family literacy services, in expanding their activities to incorporate work preparation and work experience, and in collaborating with other agencies. At the beginning of the Pilot phase, NCFL staff developed a plan for undertaking a series of technical assistance activities to address these issues that they could modify as they worked with the Pilot programs during the two-year implementation period.

In carrying out the process study, Abt Associates' study team examined each of these assumptions in terms of the challenges that they posed to the Pilot programs and the ways in which the programs addressed the challenges. This analysis is presented in Section III.

The FII Pilot Programs and Participants

NCFL funded 10 new Pilot programs in five cities that represented a variety of fiscal agents and service delivery models. An eleventh Pilot program in a sixth city was a Development site that NCFL funded to carry out additional post-employment services for participants and to assist with technical assistance for the 10 new programs. In selecting these grantees, NCFL wanted to include programs with different organizational and fiscal arrangements for delivering family literacy services to welfare recipients.

New Pilot Programs. Exhibit 2 presents the FII fiscal agents and organizations serving as Pilot programs. In each of the five cities, NCFL funded one entity to serve as the FII fiscal agent. These entities were of three types: city school districts (Akron Public Schools, Long Beach Unified School District), city government (City of Boulder and the City of Philadelphia), and a community college (Central Piedmont Community College). In two cities (Long Beach, CA and Philadelphia, PA), NCFL supported a coordinating agency to work with the programs. The role of the coordinating agency was to assist the Pilot programs and their sites in providing additional services, such as work preparation in Long Beach and coordination and advocacy in Philadelphia.

Four of the fiscal agents established Pilot programs in one or more organizations within its administrative structure. The fifth fiscal agent (the City of Philadelphia's Mayor's Commission on Literacy) used its FII grant to provide sub-grants to three community-based organizations to serve as Pilot programs. One of the fiscal agents (Akron Public Schools) also issued a sub-grant to a community organization not under its auspices to serve as a Pilot program.

The Pilot programs had varying arrangements with their collaborating partners. For example, several of the Pilot grantees had relationships with other agencies to provide one of the services components of a family literacy program. In Boulder, CO, the Columbine Elementary School, which was part of the Family Resource Schools within the city of Boulder, worked with the Boulder Public Library that offered adult education services. In Charlotte, NC, the FII fiscal agent—Central Piedmont Community College—had an existing partnership with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools under an Even Start grant, and extended this arrangement with the FII monies. In Philadelphia, PA, one of the community-based organizations that received funding from the FII grantee—the Mayor's Commission on Literacy—established a partnership with an elementary school to provide the early childhood education component of services. In three of the Pilot programs, the early childhood service provider consisted of an Even Start grantee. Selecting programs with experience in organizational coordination and the development of services for families was one strategy that NCFL used to increase the likelihood that the FII grantees would be able to deliver strong comprehensive family literacy services.

Additional Pilot Program. The eleventh Pilot program was the Canton, OH City Schools' Even Start Program, which NCFL funded as a FII Development site in 1997-1998. Canton was the sixth FII city and had four sites involved in FII. As a Development site, the Canton City Schools had designed a framework for employability services in the adult education component that it provided under Even Start. By the end of the Development period, Canton City Schools' Even Start had begun to develop an extended program for families who had participated in FII. Canton City Schools' Even Start experience in expanding its services and providing technical assistance to the Pilot programs is described in Section III. The remainder of this section provides information about the 10 new Pilot programs.

Exhibit 2. FII Pilot Program New Grantees

Program City, Number of FII Pilot Sites	Fiscal Agent	FII Pilot Sites/Provider Agencies/Service Locations
Akron OH: Two FII Pilot programs	Akron Vocational School (AVS), Akron Public Schools	• Akron Vocational School (AVS) in collaboration with Barrett Elementary School in Year 1, with a Head Start program in Year 2 • Decker Family Development Center (a partnership of Barberton City Schools, Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron, and the University of Akron) providing all components of family literacy services
Boulder CO: Two FII Pilot programs	Family Resource Schools (FRS) Program, City of Boulder, Division of Children, Youth, and Families	• Columbine Elementary School in collaboration with Boulder Public Library • Family Learning Center providing all components of family literacy services
Charlotte NC: Three FII Pilot programs	Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC)	FII was implemented in three service locations (two locations each year) that were part of the Even Start collaborative between CPCC and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Public Schools
Long Beach CA: Two FII Pilot programs with a coordinating agency	Long Beach Unified School District	FII was implemented in two organizations coordinated by Long Beach Service Delivery Area, One Stop Career Center: • Burnett Elementary School (an Even Start program site) • Long Beach Adult School
Philadelphia PA: Three FII Pilot programs with a coordinating agency	Mayor's Commission on Literacy (MCOL), City of Philadelphia	FII was implemented in three separate organizations coordinated by the MCOL: • Congreso de Latinos Unidos in collaboration with Fairhill Elementary School • The Center for Literacy in collaboration with Hill Elementary School (an Even Start program site) • Lutheran Settlement House in collaboration with Hunter Elementary School

Pilot Program Participants. The FII Pilot programs intended to enroll families for at least one year of service. The goal was for the FII programs to serve welfare recipients with young children who could benefit from the adult education, parenting, and early childhood education services. The enrollment data for each FII program for Years 1 and 2 of the Pilot phase are presented in Exhibit 3. Over the two years, a total of 396 adults were served across the 10 FII programs. Eleven percent (24) of the participants from Year 1 returned for a second year of service. While the number of adults participating in Year 1 and Year 2 are approximately the same (206 and 214, respectively), the programs differed in the numbers they served during each year. Half of the programs increased their enrollments from Year 1 to Year 2, while half decreased their enrollments. The greatest changes occurred in the programs in Long Beach, CA and Philadelphia, PA. In Long Beach, the increase in enrollment was due to a change in the process used to count FII participants. During Year 1 of FII, only adults enrolled

Exhibit 3. Number of Adults Enrolled in FII: Year 1 and Year 2

Program	Total for Year 1 (1998-1999)	New for Year 2	Returning from Year 1	Total for Year 2 (1999-2000)	Unduplicated Total for Year 1 and Year 2
Akron, OH: Akron Vocational School	10	14	0	14	24
Barberton, OH: Decker Family Development Center	54	63	13	76	117
Boulder, CO: Columbine School	11	12	0	12	23
Boulder, CO: Family Learning Center	26	14	0	14	40
Charlotte, NC: CPCC and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	40	28	2	30	68
Long Beach, CA: Burnett School	5	18	7	25	23
Long Beach, CA: Long Beach Adult School	4	14	2	16	18
Philadelphia, PA: Congreso de Latinos Unidos	18	13	0	13	31
Philadelphia, PA: Center for Literacy	17	7	0	7	24
Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Settlement House	21	7	0	7	28
Total	**206**	**190**	**24**	**214**	**396**

in the Welfare-to-Work program were considered as FII participants. For Year 2, all adults participating in the target adult education program were reported as FII participants. In Philadelphia, two of the programs (Center for Literacy and Lutheran Settlement House) had an enrollment decrease of 59 percent and 67 percent, respectively.

Since one of FII's objectives was to provide adult participants with adult education and employment preparation services, it was important that the programs recruit participants who could benefit from these services. Presented in Exhibit 4 are the data for the highest grade that Year 2 participants had completed prior to enrolling in FII services. Eighty percent of the participants had less than a high school education. Of this group of participants, 36 percent had attended the 9th grade or below and 33 percent had completed either the 10th or 11th grades. Half of the programs had no or only one participant with a high school diploma or more education. These data indicate that the majority of the adults served by the FII programs were candidates for adult education services.

Exhibit 4. Highest Grade Completed by Adults Prior to Their Enrollment in Year 2 (N=206)

Program	Grade 9 or Below	Grades 10-11	Attended 12th Grade, No Diploma or GED	Completed HS Diploma or GED	Attended or Completed College
Akron, OH: Akron Vocational School	1	11	2	0	0
Barberton, OH: Decker Family Development Center	28	27	4	13	3
Boulder, CO: Columbine School	5	1	0	4	2
Boulder, CO: Family Learning Center	4	2	2	0	5
Charlotte, NC: CPCC and Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools	15	13	1	1	0
Long Beach, CA: Burnett School	14	5	4	0	1
Long Beach, CA: Long Beach Adult School	2	4	3	5	1
Philadelphia, PA: Congreso de Latinos Unidos	1	2	4	2	3
Philadelphia, PA: Center for Literacy	1	3	0	1	0
Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Settlement House	3	1	2	0	0
Total	**74 (36%)**	**69 (33%)**	**22 (11%)**	**26 (13%)**	**15 (7%)**

Another indicator of the eligibility of the participants for the FII services was their ability to benefit from employment preparation to obtain a job or increase their wages. At the time of their enrollment in Year 2 of FII, 61 percent of the participants for whom data were available (173 adults) were receiving governmental assistance. Approximately 68 percent of the Year 2 enrollees (179) who reported income data had an annual family income of $14,999 or less. These data indicate that the FII Pilot programs were serving adults whose economic circumstances could be enhanced by participating in work preparation services.

Other data that the FII programs collected at the time of participants' enrollment concerned their demographic characteristics. The data for those enrolling in Year 2 of FII indicated that almost all (95 percent) of the FII participants were female. The age of adult participants ranged from 18 years to 61 years, with the average age being 28.8 years. The race and ethnicity of these individuals was well distributed. Thirty-seven percent of participants were Hispanic or Latino, 35 percent were white, and 26 percent

were African American. The remaining two percent were American Indian, Alaskan Native, or Asian.

Two other characteristics of interest were participants' household structure and their prior enrollment in adult education. Approximately half (53 percent) of Year 2 FII participants were single parents. Twenty-nine percent were living as a couple with children, and 15 percent lived in an extended family. The fact that half of the adult participants were living as single parents meant that they might need additional support such as childcare in order to attend the FII education and parenting services. With regard to prior experience in adult education services, 70 percent (170) of the Year 2 participants for whom data were available had received adult education services before enrolling in FII. Approximately half (53 percent) of these individuals had participated in secondary adult basic education or General Educational Development (GED) preparation.

The available data about the Year 2 FII participants indicated that by the second year of the grant, the Pilot programs generally were able to recruit a population of families who could benefit from family literacy services. While some programs had difficulty locating eligible participants, over half of them were successful in recruiting their FII target population. Among the factors accounting for this success were the programs' partnerships with Even Start and Head Start programs. Since these funding streams are aimed at supporting services for undereducated and economically disadvantaged families, they were likely sources of the target population for FII. The FII programs also were working with a population of adults for whom attending adult education services was not a new experience. The availability of adult education services through FII also might have attracted participants, as well as their ability to attend the program with their children. Finally, the economic circumstances of the FII participants indicated that a majority could benefit from employment services that would assist them in obtaining a job or upgrading their current job. While the timing of the FII Pilot phase was such that a number of welfare recipients were in the workforce, many participants still required additional skill training to become financially independent.

III. Meeting the Challenges of Implementing a Family Literacy Program

Introduction

The 10 FII programs began the two-year Pilot phase of activities with differing levels of organizational capacity, infrastructure, and experience with family literacy. Because of these variations and the complexities involved in implementing a comprehensive family literacy program, the programs faced many challenges in providing services to welfare recipients that would prepare them simultaneously for work and for carrying out their roles as parents and teachers of their children. Among the factors that facilitated the Pilot programs' capacity to address these challenges was the technical assistance that NCFL provided to them. This assistance is discussed below. Also described in this section are the strategies that the Pilot programs used to address the challenges that they encountered in implementing a work-focused family literacy program.

Technical Assistance to Pilot Programs

In designing the Pilot phase of FII, NCFL planned to deliver intensive technical assistance to the programs. This plan involved scheduled technical assistance visits to each program during the two-year period (three visits to each program during each of the two years, except for the Akron Vocational School that received four visits). The format for the visits consisted of an observation-feedback-management cycle of activities where NCFL staff observed some aspect of the programs' activities, provided feedback to the program staff on what they had observed, and then conducted a discussion about key management activities. For some of the visits, NCFL staff or their representatives (i.e., staff from the eleventh Pilot program that had been a Development site) conducted a workshop on a topic related to the implementation of one of the four components of family literacy. These workshops were designed to assist Pilot staff in strengthening their practices related to delivering one of the core services or adapting components of services. In between the visits, NCFL staff held numerous telephone conferences with Pilot program staff, communicated with Pilot program staff via email, and met with Pilot program staff at family literacy conferences. Furthermore, the Pilot program staff often initiated calls to NCFL. In addition to these activities, NCFL convened the Pilot program staff during the summers of 1999 and 2000 in the city of one of the grantees (Long Beach, CA in 1999 and Charlotte, NC in 2000). During these meetings, the programs reviewed the year's activities, discussed challenges they had encountered and how they met them, and planned for the next year. The Pilot programs also had the opportunity to visit FII-related services in these cities. In Long Beach, the grantees visited the career center to review the variety of career awareness and job preparation services available to FII participants. In Charlotte, the Pathways Program at Central Piedmont Community College was the focus of the site visit, where FII grantees were able to view the transition services available to FII participants.

Another component of technical assistance that NCFL provided to the Pilot programs was on data collection. NCFL trained Pilot staff to collect demographic and outcome data for adults, children, and the family. They also gave ongoing technical assistance on data collection, as well as provided feedback to the programs on the data they submitted to NCFL. The data collection process proved to be challenging to the Pilot programs. While all Pilot programs submitted data to NCFL, the response rates were low for the submission of complete data sets. There are a number of possible reasons for the low response rate. These include: the amount of data collection may have been perceived as overwhelming; many Pilot program staff funded with state adult education monies were in the process of meeting the new requirements under the National Reporting System (NRS) and were not able to integrate the FII data reporting requirements with the NRS; and the Pilot staff did not understand how to use data for program management and, hence, did not develop an ownership of the data. The training and assistance provided on data collection is one area that NCFL will need to explore further with grantees.

The technical assistance activities contributed significantly to the progress that the Pilot programs made in developing their family literacy services. The NCFL staff provided guidance to the programs' staff in solving problems, identifying resources, coordinating with other services, and developing strategies for recruiting program participants. The workshops that were conducted also presented models of activities that the Pilot program staff could adapt for use in their programs.

Since its inception, NCFL has included technical assistance as part of its program model development in family literacy. The staffs' experience with the FII programs reinforced their belief that substantial technical assistance is needed when programs with varying degrees of existing family literacy services expand their activities to serve more clients or different types of client. Because family literacy is a complex, multi-component program, the delivery of implementation training alone appears not to be sufficient for guiding programs in developing their services. Follow-up technical assistance, in which programs are able to receive assistance directed at their specific challenges, is a critical dimension of the process of implementing quality services.

Framework for Addressing Implementation Challenges

The assumptions guiding the FII implementation provide a framework for understanding the activities that the Pilot programs had to carry out and the challenges that emerged as the programs attempted to offer family literacy services that would meet the needs of welfare recipients. Our analysis of the assumptions and the programs' activities revealed three overarching factors that were critical to their implementation of family literacy services:

- The Pilot programs' organizational infrastructure;

- Coordination within family literacy program components and between the program and external organizations; and

- Integration of workforce preparation content within the adult education and parent time components of a family literacy program, as well as content integration across the program components of early childhood education, adult education, parent time, and PACT.

Our discussion presents an analysis of these three factors in terms of the activities that the Pilot programs carried out in: 1) establishing and strengthening their core family literacy services, 2) attempting to recruit welfare recipients who were in the process of transitioning from welfare to work, and 3) adapting their family literacy services to meet the specific needs of these clients.

Building an Organizational Infrastructure

The programs began their Pilot activities with the challenge of building an infrastructure of family literacy services that included:

- Developing or strengthening the core four-component family literacy program;

- Securing adequate staff and space to deliver the services;

- Recruiting the target population of welfare clients in transition to work; and

- Organizing the fiscal resources to support the required services.

Inherent in all of these activities was the need for leadership from the program's director or other staff who had the authority to make programmatic, staff, and financial decisions. As described below, the experiences of the Pilot programs indicated that the creation of an organizational infrastructure is a necessary and critical component of delivering family literacy services.

Core Family Literacy Services. In funding the Pilot grantees, NCFL made the assumption that the Pilot programs (with the exception of the two programs in Boulder, CO) had four operational components of family literacy services. During the Pilot program training that NCFL conducted during the summer of 1998, the four-component model of family literacy services was presented to the Pilot program staff. All of the program staff were trained except for those from the Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH, whom NCFL had trained earlier and who had received family literacy training as an Even Start site. After the training, the Pilot programs had to assess the extent to which the family services they were offering reflected the activities

they had learned about during the training. Four of the programs (Decker Family Development Center, Barberton, OH; one of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' program sites; Burnett School, Long Beach, CA; and Long Beach Adult School, Long Beach, CA) had core family literacy services that could serve as a base for strengthening and adaptation. The other six programs either had to develop one or more missing components of service or significantly enhance the components they were offering.

The six programs used three strategies to add or strengthen services:

- Hire and train staff to offer the service;
- Develop a partnership with an organization that could deliver the missing service; or
- Coordinate in a different way with existing partners to provide the service.

For example, Boulder's Family Learning Center primarily had provided child-focused services (e.g., after-school activities for school-age children) prior to becoming an FII Pilot program. Their approach to developing an adult education component was to hire and train staff who could provide English-as-a-second-language (ESL) instruction to the Hispanic families who were enrolling in the FII program.

Congreso in Philadelphia, PA, whose main service was providing job training for Hispanic and Latino adults, had to form a partnership with the staff of an elementary school who could develop parent time and PACT components for FII participants. Similarly, the Akron Vocational School (AVS) in Akron, OH had little experience in providing services to children. The AVS staff formed a relationship with the Barrett Elementary School to develop their child education and PACT components during Year 1 of the Pilot phase. During Year 2, AVS formed a new partnership with a Head Start program to provide the early childhood education component. This was an example of where some programs had to develop multiple partners before the optimal relationship was formed for delivering the needed services.

A third strategy was to coordinate differently with existing partners or to expand the services being offered within the Pilot program's organization. For example, AVS expanded its vocational services to include adult basic education instruction and GED preparation for students who needed to strengthen their basic skills before participating in job readiness training. The Lutheran Settlement House in Philadelphia had to reorganize and strengthen its services to incorporate ESL instruction for FII participants.

In addition to finding staff and partners to provide the needed core services, some Pilot programs had to build a common understanding with their partners about the philosophy and services associated with a comprehensive family literacy program. The process of explaining the assumptions guiding a multi-component program and how the multiple

components needed to function as a unified set of services often was difficult and time-consuming.

All of the programs spent considerable time in Year 1 building a base of four components of family literacy services. The programs that had to identify partners, form relationships, develop services, and create a common understanding of family literacy had particular challenges in establishing a set of operational family literacy services. It was clear that without a strong base of core family literacy services, the programs would not be able to develop the additional work preparation activities that would be needed to assist FII participants in entering the workforce or upgrading their existing jobs.

Staff Capacity. The Pilot programs had to address two key issues with regard to staffing: identifying qualified existing staff to carry out the services associated with the four components of family literacy, and hiring new staff when existing staff were not available. Two factors that affected the selection of staff were the program director's understanding of the requirements for each component of service and his/her relationship with the program's collaborating agencies.

The four programs that began the FII Pilot with the four core family literacy services had existing staff for each of the services. As they expanded the adult education component to include work preparation, however, the programs had to hire someone who could perform that function. Since work preparation was a new activity for most of the FII programs, the skills and experience that staff required for this position were not always clear. For example, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, NC hired an employment facilitator during Year 1 of the Pilot phase to work with program participants in job shadowing, mentoring, and career awareness activities. In other programs, existing staff expanded their responsibilities to include work preparation. The Akron Vocational School in Akron, OH assigned a part of the career development counselor's time to work with FII participants. Once the Pilot programs hired staff or expanded the responsibilities of existing staff, they had to develop the capacity of the staff to deliver the needed services and provide support to keep them committed to the program.

Most FII programs either added or replaced staff during the Pilot phase. Sometimes the skills of the existing staff were not a match with the skills staff needed to deliver the components of the family literacy services that were being enhanced in programs. In other instances, staff had to be replaced after they were hired because their skills were not appropriate for the tasks to which they were assigned. The replacement of staff often resulted in a stronger staff, as occurred at the Columbine School FII program in Boulder, CO where the staff were expanded to include a computer instructor and ESL instructors. Other programs also were resourceful in finding appropriate staff. The Family Learning Center in Boulder added a GED instructor from a community college and a consultant to provide parent time, and the Center for Literacy in Philadelphia, PA utilized AmeriCorps volunteers to provide individualized instruction in GED preparation as a supplement to the regular adult basic education staff.

Many factors contributed to the staffing issues that the Pilot programs had to address, including the extent to which staff with the required experience and expertise were available to work in a family literacy program. As the FII program directors became more familiar with the requirements for delivering family literacy services, they were better able to hire staff for their programs and to work with their collaborating agencies in identifying staff who would be appropriate. Having qualified staff provided a base for programs that was essential in enabling them to provide services.

Space for Services. As the FII Pilot programs assembled the required components of family literacy services, some of them had to address the challenge of locating or negotiating appropriate space for the delivery of these services. While a few programs had to find safe and secure locations for providing services, others had to determine ways of using limited space creatively.

One example was the Akron Vocational School in Akron, OH that added early childhood services to its FII program. In addition to establishing a partnership with the Barrett Elementary School for the children's education component, AVS spent a number of months finding an appropriate location in the service area of the Barrett School in which to offer the integrated components of service. The Lutheran Settlement House in Philadelphia, PA had to address the issue of having no consistent space for parent time and PACT at their partner's location. Since a specific area at the Hunter School had not been designated for these services, the FII staff had to find appropriate space each time parent time or PACT was offered. A lesson from these programs' experiences was that the negotiation of space often is a critical element in forming a partnership for delivering a component of family literacy services.

For the FII programs that offered all components of family literacy in one facility, often the space for one or more of the services was limited or had to be available for multiple components of services. This meant that FII staff sometimes had to organize furniture and materials in creative ways to utilize the space efficiently for the type of service being offered. For example, the FII staff at the Burnett School in Long Beach, CA created an instructional environment in the adult education room that enabled both whole group and individual work to be carried out in a small space. Not only is having space for multiple services a critical aspect of building an infrastructure for family literacy, the staff also must be knowledgeable about how to configure the space to meet the requirements of the services that are to be delivered.

Recruitment of FII Participants. NCFL selected the FII Pilot programs based on the assumption that the programs would be able to recruit and serve families with parents who were on welfare or were transitioning from welfare to work, and who had children who could benefit from early childhood services. As the Pilot programs organized their family literacy services, they had to address several issues in recruiting the target population for FII. These issues were:

- The availability of welfare recipients with children in the communities that they served;

- The role of the social service agency in referring FII participants; and

- The scheduling of the services to meet the needs of the target population.

Some of the FII programs began the Pilot phase with an existing client population of welfare recipients. Programs such as the Burnett School in Long Beach, CA and the Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH had been serving welfare recipients prior to their participation in FII and continued to do so. Other programs had the challenge of locating families receiving TANF and recruiting them to participate in family literacy. The recruitment was particularly difficult for two of the programs (the Columbine School in Boulder, CO and the Lutheran Settlement House in Philadelphia, PA), where many of the available participants were undocumented immigrants who were focused on improving their English language skills rather than preparing for work. In Boulder, recruitment was a learning process for the staff as they explored the community to identify the available target population who could enroll in FII services.

The age of the children in the FII target families also was a factor in developing services. A number of the FII Pilot programs (e.g., Akron Vocational School, Congreso, the Family Learning Center, and the Lutheran Settlement House) had participants with primarily school-age children. This required that the FII staff develop new ways of providing after-school services for these participants. One factor that facilitated the recruitment of families with age-appropriate children was the existing partnership that the FII program had with a preschool program that enabled them to continue the service under FII. The Burnett School in Long Beach, CA and the Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH were examples of these programs.

As part of their training for the FII, the Pilot programs were encouraged to form relationships with the welfare or social service agency in their community. One example of an effective partnership was in Charlotte, NC, where the social service agency staff worked closely with the FII staff from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in identifying clients for the family literacy program. The two staffs met frequently and shared information about current and potential FII participants. In Philadelphia, the staff from the FII programs had a challenge working with the social service system since Pennsylvania's state welfare law required that TANF recipients work, and their participation in education and training did not qualify as part of their work experience. The staff from the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (the fiscal agent for the FII programs in Philadelphia) served as a liaison with social services in determining the ways in which welfare recipients might participate in FII.

As the staff at the FII programs determined both the availability and range of skills of the FII target population, they made adjustments in program services (e.g., scheduling, content of instruction) to meet these participants' needs. For some programs, it was

more feasible to reschedule a service than it was to locate additional families to participate in the program at the original time of the service. The FII target population also had a wide range of skills that had to be considered in recruitment. As the staff at some programs realized that the basic skills and/or English proficiency of participants were not sufficient for them to obtain jobs, the staff had to adjust the services to address these needs. A key challenge was for staff to provide the needed time for participants to address their limited basic skill. These practices reflected the FII staffs' flexibility in assessing their communities and determining the likely sources and types of program participants.

Fiscal Resources. In structuring the funding for the FII Pilot programs, NCFL intended that the programs use their FII grants as supplemental monies to customize their services to serve welfare recipients. The Pilot programs were to build upon their existing resources and could use their FII funds to hire staff to provide work preparation services, pay for existing staff, purchase supplies to support the delivery of services, and support childcare. The three fiscal agents without a coordinating entity (Akron Public Schools, the Family Resources Schools in Boulder, CO, and the Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte, NC) received grants for each of two years that averaged approximately $38,700 per program for Year 1 and $25,800 per program for Year 2. The two fiscal agents with coordinating entities (Long Beach Unified School District and the Mayor's Commission on Literacy in Philadelphia) were awarded smaller grants for the Pilot programs and funds to support staff at the coordinating entity. The FII grants were a modest portion of the overall operating costs of the Pilot sites, ranging from approximately eight percent to 25 percent of the programs' budgets.

In order to leverage their FII funds effectively, the FII staff had to have a clear understanding of the extent to which the current services they were delivering had to be expanded or supplemented. This understanding took time to develop, and the FII staff were better able to use their grant funds as they determined the types of staff that were needed, the materials that had to be purchased, and the services, such as childcare, that were required to support FII participants.

Leadership. Central to the development of an organizational infrastructure in the FII programs was the leadership that was provided. In some programs, a key administrator in the fiscal agent performed this role (e.g., Central Piedmont Community College), while in other programs the site director held this responsibility (e.g., Decker Family Development Center). For the programs that had a coordinating agency (Long Beach Unified School District and the Philadelphia Mayor's Commission on Literacy), the provision of leadership was a shared function between the staff in the coordinating agency and at the site. Regardless of where the leader was situated, there was a consistent set of activities that this individual had to carry out that were critical to the functioning of the FII programs. These activities included hiring appropriate staff, negotiating with partner agencies to provide the needed components of family literacy services, ensuring that adequate funding was available, serving as a spokesperson for the family literacy program, and monitoring the overall operation of the components of service.

The development of leadership in the FII programs evolved over the first year of the initiative. The complexity of organizing and managing a comprehensive family literacy program was not necessarily clear to the FII administrative staff at the beginning of the grant period. As these staff understood the philosophy and operational concept of family literacy as well as the skills and experience required by staff to provide the services, they were able to make appropriate programmatic and staff decisions. The process of identifying the FII target population and forming a relationship with the local welfare agency also took time and was an important element in stabilizing FII services. The more knowledgeable the FII administrative staff were about the components of family literacy services, the more facile they became in negotiating with their partners and advocating for the program.

Coordinating Program Services

As the staff at the FII programs developed an organizational base for their family literacy services, they also had the challenge of coordinating services within their family literacy program and with external agencies. The coordination of services within the program was central to the concept of a comprehensive family literacy program. The assumption guiding this model was that the four components (adult education, parent time, early childhood education, and PACT) would operate as a unified service even when more than one agency was responsible for the operation of the components. For half of the FII programs where multiple agencies were providing services, this coordination was an important element in creating an organized family literacy program.

Another important aspect of coordination to the FII programs were the relationships that the staff had to form with other agencies in their communities that served the FII target population. This was a process that all FII programs had to address.

Within Program Coordination. For the FII programs that did not offer the four components of family literacy at the beginning of their grant, a critical initial step was determining how to add the missing service. This process involved identifying appropriate agencies that might provide the service, negotiating a partnership, and ascertaining the ways in which the staff from the FII program and agency could work together. For programs that had limited or no experience in forming such partnerships, this process proved to be challenging. For example, the Akron Vocational School in Akron, OH had to identify a partner to provide children's education. As AVS formed a relationship with the Head Start program, the two entities had to build a common understanding of the operation of a family literacy program and the respective roles that the agencies would play. This process required staff time and energy. By the second year of the FII grant, the two entities were holding joint weekly meetings of staff providing the adult education, parent time, and early childhood education services to share information and plan instructional activities.

A key factor that affected programs' capacity to offer a full array of family literacy services by establishing partnerships with other agencies was the availability of the required services in the community. When an agency qualified to provide the missing service was not easily identified or when there were complex organizational arrangements to work out, the process of coordinating with a partner was difficult. The FII programs that had existing relationships with service providers that could offer the needed service were able to expedite the development of the partnership and organize the full array of family literacy services.

Another type of coordination that the FII programs undertook was to establish linkages with other programs in their organizations that could serve as articulation services for FII participants. As participants completed their adult education and work preparation activities, the FII staff looked for opportunities to refer them to further training or job placement. For example, Central Piedmont Community College's Pathways Program--a short-term, intensive job preparation program--served as a next step in training for some of the FII participants. At Congreso in Philadelphia, PA, the FII staff referred participants to their Bilingual Customer Service program that facilitated their job placement. FII participants who completed their GED at the Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH were able to enroll in Akron Vocational School's vocational education program. All of these opportunities enabled FII participants to move ahead in developing their skills for employment and to work toward economic self-sufficiency.

Interagency Coordination. The FII programs' coordination with other agencies consisted of developing a relationship with the local welfare agency and identifying agencies that could provide services to meet the needs of FII participants that were not being addressed by the FII program. In their technical assistance to the FII programs, NCFL emphasized the programs' need to work with their welfare offices in identifying FII participants and in negotiating participants' ability to receive educational services as part of their allowable activities. The staff at the Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH was successful in establishing a relationship with the welfare office such that the welfare staff referred the majority of Decker's FII participants. Because the Decker Center is a unique organizational arrangement involving a number of medical, social, and educational agencies, the welfare office staff viewed Decker as a comprehensive service offering family, educational, and support services that would be beneficial to their clients with multiple barriers to employment. Other FII programs worked with their welfare offices in varying degrees to identify the FII target population. For example, the staff from the welfare office in Charlotte, NC viewed the FII family literacy program offered by the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools as an opportunity to serve their clients who were on a waiting list and were not ready to enter the Work First program. The welfare office staff met with the family literacy staff regularly to discuss the status of existing and potential FII participants. In Long Beach, the FII programs were able to target participants in the city's Welfare-to-Work program supported by the U.S. Department of Labor, which brought additional services to clients. In Philadelphia, the Mayor's Commission on Literacy served as a liaison to the various local welfare offices that were in the service areas of the three FII programs. Because the state's

welfare law restricted participants' enrollment in education and training, the negotiation of potential FII participants was challenging.

An important aspect of the FII programs' activities was their capacity to address the support service needs of participants. When the FII programs were not able to offer services such as transportation and childcare, the staff had to locate other agencies with this capacity. The range of service needs that FII participants presented was varied and included the need for assistance with mental and physical health problems, substance abuse, and domestic violence. A particular challenge for FII staff was to balance their efforts in providing primarily an educational service with offering support in these areas of need. The FII staff reported that participants entering the program with multiple personal issues often had to address these issues before they were able to engage fully in the four family literacy service components. Participants who had personal barriers to participation, such as drug or alcohol problems, or who had unstable home situations needed to address these issues in order to focus on the services that they were receiving in the family literacy program. For some participants, this process of undergoing simultaneous personal change in addressing these barriers was very difficult. The Pilot staff's observations were that participants needed to receive the services sequentially so that they could address their personal issues while beginning their adult education and work preparation services, and gradually move to participating in the full array of family literacy services. Thus ensuring the stability of participants was an important concern for Pilot staff in structuring the services they provided to participants.

Some of the FII programs were well positioned to address the support service needs of the participants. As noted previously, the Decker Family Development Center offered onsite comprehensive services that were accessible to FII participants. The FII coordinating entity in Long Beach, CA—the One Stop Career Transition Center—had a variety of partner agencies that the FII staff were able to use as referrals for FII participants. They also had a Literacy Liaison who functioned as a case manager in referring FII participants to the services provided by the Career Transition Center. Since the number and quality of support services varied by community, the process of coordinating with support agencies was not the same across FII programs. There was consistency, however, in the FII staffs' concern about the well being of the participants and their need to address these social support issues in order to benefit optimally from family literacy services.

Integrating Services

A key tenet that underlies the comprehensive family literacy model is the integration of content across service components. For the FII programs, service integration had two aspects: including workforce preparation information in the adult education and parent time components of the program, and integrating content across the components of adult education, parent time, early childhood education, and PACT. Service integration

is a challenging process, and the FII programs were able to begin this process once they had established four operating components of services.

Integration of Work Preparation. Since a main purpose of the FII was to prepare welfare recipients and adults transitioning from welfare to work for employment, the programs had to develop an array of employment--related services that could meet the needs of participants. The programs used a variety of approaches, including integrating work-based applications into the teaching of basic skills, providing a range of work-preparation services, and including job-seeking and job-keeping issues in parent time. The programs' general strategy was to extend the time that adult education services were offered so that this instruction would include work-preparation topics, or to increase the emphasis of work topics in the time allocated for adult education and parent time. For example, the Center for Literacy in Philadelphia increased the class hours for adult education and added individualized tutoring that was conducted by AmeriCorps volunteers. The Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH also lengthened the hours for adult education and incorporated topics that were related to job preparation.

The FII staff's selection of an approach for integrating job-preparation content was influenced by a number of factors, including:

- The prior work experience of FII participants;
- The extent of experience that the FII staff had with the content of work-preparation;
- The resources that were available in the community and staffs' knowledge of and existing relationships with business; and
- The pre-existing work services offered by the organization implementing the FII family literacy program.

Presented in Exhibit 5 are the work-preparation services that the FII programs were implementing by the end of Year 2. The services ranged from a cluster of career awareness activities to job placement and post-employment support. All of the programs incorporated classroom-based activities such as discussions about career awareness, resume writing, simulated job interviews, and computer skills training. Some programs (e.g., Burnett School in Long Beach, CA, Columbine School in Boulder, CO, Decker Family Development Center in Barberton, OH, and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in Charlotte, NC) implemented regularly scheduled visits to businesses and community agencies to learn about the world of work and specific jobs. A few of the FII programs were able to enroll participants in volunteer and internship positions, or in vocational or job training programs. Furthermore, the Burnett School, Long Beach Adult School, the Decker Center, and Congreso all began to develop job placement and post-employment services for FII participants who were transitioning into paid employment.

Exhibit 5. Work-Preparation Services Implemented by FII Programs

Program	Career Awareness, Resume Writing, Simulated Job Interviews, Computer Skills	Job Site Visits, Job Shadowing	Volunteer Work, Internship, Work Experience	Vocational School, Job Training Program	Job Placement, Post-Employment Support
Akron, OH: Akron Vocational School	✔	✔			
Barberton, OH: Decker Family Development Center	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Boulder, CO: Columbine School	✔	✔	✔		
Boulder, CO: Family Learning Center	✔			✔	
Charlotte, NC: CPCC and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	✔	✔	✔		
Long Beach, CA: Burnett School	✔	✔	✔		✔
Long Beach, CA: Long Beach Adult School	✔			✔	✔
Philadelphia, PA: Congreso de Latinos Unidos	✔				✔
Philadelphia, PA: Center for Literacy	✔				
Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Settlement House	✔		✔		

The FII programs used various organizational strategies to support their efforts to integrate work-preparation content into their services. The two programs in Long Beach, CA and those in Charlotte, NC hired an employment liaison to establish relationships with the business community and to organize the visits to businesses along with mentoring and internship experiences. The FII programs in Long Beach had the advantage of having an FII coordinating organization that was a one-stop career center. This entity had numerous employment-related services and Welfare-to-Work support services, such as childcare and transportation, which FII participants could access as they began the job-seeking process. Some programs had access to vocational training staff, such as Congreso in Philadelphia, PA and the Akron Vocational School in Akron, OH, which enabled them to develop work-preparation activities with existing staff.

The FII programs had to address two main challenges in integrating work-preparation content and activities into their programs. One was determining the optimal amount and sequence of these given the background and experience of participants. When the participants varied considerably in their work experience, the staff had to organize activities that matched their needs. This process often required creative scheduling of activities and grouping of participants. Another challenge was having staff who could carry out a number of responsibilities simultaneously, including establishing relationships with businesses and community agencies in setting up site visits, arranging internships and mentoring experiences, developing instructional materials with a work focus, and providing career counseling to participants. All of the FII programs made progress in these activities over the two years, and the more knowledgeable they were about the FII participants and the community, the more proficient they were in accomplishing these tasks.

Integration of Content Across Service Components. One of the most difficult activities for staff to undertake in a comprehensive family literacy program is to infuse services and content that are complimentary across the different components of service. In order to do this, staff must have time for planning and meeting, and they must understand the general content that is being addressed across components. The FII programs approached this integration activity by incorporating work themes into both adult education and parent time. As the FII participants began their career awareness and work-preparation activities, other topics arose that the FII staff thought would be critical to participants' success in the workplace. These included time management and fiscal management. During the parent time sessions, FII staff addressed these topics in the context of the work experiences that participants were preparing for and in terms of general family management.

One aspect of integration that was particularly challenging to the FII programs was the alignment of adult education with early childhood education. The experiences of the FII Development sites provide important lessons about integration, and the Development site administered by Rochester, NY Public Schools was an exemplary example of how these two components of family literacy can be integrated. In Rochester, the four components of family literacy were offered in the same building and the staff from adult education and early childhood education met regularly to plan instructional activities. This planning included the coordination of teaching topics, so that the adult education classes paralleled the topics addressed in early childhood related to work. Issues related to child development also were integrated into the adult education instruction. Furthermore, the early childhood program included work-related experiences for the children in which their parents participated. The alignment of content in the components facilitated the reinforcement of key themes and skills across components as well as the integration of family issues. This coordination of curricula and activities was greatly facilitated by the co-location of services and the staff's willingness to meet and plan their content and activities.

Three Years of FII at Canton City Schools' Even Start Program

Canton City Schools' Even Start was one of five programs that participated in the FII Development Phase in 1997-1998. The primary purpose of this phase was for the grantees to design approaches for providing work preparation services within the context of a multi-component family literacy program. The approaches to program design and service delivery that grantees formulated in this phase were intended to guide the programs that participated in the Pilot Phase of FII from 1998-2000.

The NCFL's decision to fund the Canton City Schools' Even Start as a Pilot program contributed to the overall FII process evaluation in two ways: 1) the Canton City Schools' FII experience over a three-year period extended our understanding of the challenges involved in the implementation of FII; and 2) the lessons learned from the Canton program's experiences helped to validate the conclusions that emerged from the Pilot program data.

This section has presented a number of the implementation challenges that were common across the Pilot programs as well as the organizational characteristics and issues that influenced the FII implementation process. Canton City Schools' Even Start may be viewed as a good example of how organizational factors can facilitate family literacy program implementation. The Canton FII program is situated in an adult education program with a history of conducting innovative programs. Prior to receiving the FII grant, the Canton City Schools' Even Start had developed and operated a four-component family literacy program for several years. A stable organizational infrastructure and a philosophically supportive management formed the foundation of Canton's FII services.

The FII director had access to and authority over a large pool of qualified instructors who were employed by the city's school system. This enabled the director to assign to FII classes staff who had appropriate education and experience to meet the needs of the FII participants. The FII director also had the expertise to design a new instructional curriculum and manage its implementation (e.g., decisions regarding service locations, staffing, number of classes, class schedule, and organization of lesson plans). These organizational conditions greatly facilitated the capacity of Canton City Schools' Even Start to design and implement an integrated, multi-component family literacy program that addressed the work preparation needs of the target population.

During the FII Development Phase, the Canton City Schools' Even Start staff designed the basic architecture of a work-focused family literacy curriculum using the National Institute for Literacy's Equipped for Future (EFF) as the framework. At the end of the year-long Development period, the curriculum's overall structure, component parts, and sequencing of lessons had been formulated. The next step was translating the basic model into a series of lesson plans and classroom activities, which the FII staff carried out in the first year of the Pilot phase. By the end of that year, the Canton City Schools' FII curriculum consisted of logically organized activities that integrated the objectives of

adult basic literacy instruction, life skills development, work preparation, parent time, early childhood education, and parent-child joint activities.

The recruitment and retention of the FII target population posed a significant challenge for Canton as it did for the other Pilot programs. During the FII Development and Pilot phases, the Canton City Schools' Even Start staff focused their efforts adapting the FII services to address participants' needs and meet the requirements of welfare reform. During this period, the Canton staff modified their services to accommodate the changing population of FII participants who enrolled in the program with multiple barriers and risk factors. The program, which had increased the service hours from 14 hours per week to 30 hours per week during the Development phase, further modified the program during the Pilot phase to provide greater flexibility in class schedules, reduce the number of FII adult classes, and adjust the classroom activities to serve fewer participants more intensively.

A major accomplishment that the Canton City Schools' FII staff achieved during the Pilot phase was to refine their employability services. These services included: monthly goal-setting and weekly review conferences with adult participants; career transition activities such as job shadowing, mentoring, and resume writing; and the use of a portfolio system to document adults' skills in performing the roles of worker, citizen, and family member that constitute the EFF framework. The implementation of the employability services required that FII staff develop specific activities for participants and instructors, as well as form a network of businesses and other organizations where FII participants could conduct the work preparation activities. As a result of this experience, the FII staff acquired the skills and strategies for developing and maintaining working relationships with the business community.

One of the challenges for FII programs was to offer ongoing support to FII participants as they made the transition from attending a family program to managing their families and working in full-time positions. In Canton, the FII staff developed a transition program for post-employment support known as the Reunion. The Canton City Schools' FII staff held weekly Reunion activities from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at a local YMCA. At the Reunion, former FII adult participants and their children were able to engage in a variety of educational, social, and support activities. Instructional activities based on a workforce development curriculum were provided to adults, and America Reads volunteers from Malone College conducted literacy-related activities with pre-school and elementary school-age children. Childcare also was available. The Canton City Schools' FII program purchased evening meals prepared by a local high school food preparation program that were served to participants. During the Reunion meeting, the adult participants also engaged in support group activities such as discussions about personal and work-related experiences that had occurred during the previous week and the challenges of balancing work and family needs. In addition to the Reunion meetings, the Canton City Schools' FII staff held family nights that combined literacy-related activities involving parents and children as well as social activities. These meetings were held periodically, and both current and former FII participants were invited to attend.

Another important activity that the Canton City Schools' FII staff undertook during the Pilot phase was to provide technical assistance to the Pilot program grantees. The staff had incorporated the EFF framework and materials into their family literacy services, which enabled them to provide training on this process to FII Pilot programs as well as to other family literacy programs. The Canton City Schools' FII staff offered this assistance in staff development conferences and workshops. They also built on the experience and knowledge they gained from operating a family literacy program in disseminating and transferring their successful strategies. By the end of the Pilot phase, the Canton City Schools' FII staff had demonstrated the feasibility of developing a multi-component family literacy program that not only integrates services across the adult and child education components, but also incorporates work preparation and life skills development into a logically coherent instructional framework. The Canton City Schools' FII experience illustrates the directions that the Pilot programs may pursue in their continuing efforts to enhance work-focused family literacy services.

FII Pilot Sites' Year 3 Plans

At the end of Year 2 of FII, all programs except for one were planning to continue their family literacy activities and their focus on adults' transitioning from welfare to work. The programs' experiences during the two-year FII period provided them with a firm understanding of the organizational and programmatic conditions that are needed to implement a comprehensive family literacy program. Furthermore, all of the programs had made significant progress in developing an organizational infrastructure, working collaboratively with other organizations, offering instruction that was appropriate for the FII participants, and providing a holistic service that was aimed at meeting the needs of the family.

In organizing their services for Year 3, the programs attempted to address some of the areas of service that had proved to be challenging. The activities the programs were planning to undertake include the following:

- Expanding the activities that would be delivered under various components;
- Developing new partnerships with agencies to deliver services;
- Increasing the number of family literacy program sites;
- Obtaining new funding to support family literacy services;
- Participating in research and data collection; and
- Aligning with a new fiscal agent.

The Year 3 plans for the FII programs are presented in Exhibit 6. As the exhibit indicates, the programs approached Year 3 with a variety of activities to strengthen their services and better meet the needs of the families in the programs. For example, four of the sites (Decker Family Development Center, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Congreso, and the Lutheran Settlement House) were broadening their curricular activities in work preparation. Two programs (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Columbine School) were expanding their locations for delivering family literacy services. In the area of funding, the Lutheran Settlement House received a grant from the Barbara Bush Foundation to support the infrastructure of their family literacy services and for further development of their early childhood education component. Finally, two programs (Akron Vocational School and the Columbine School) planned to reorganize their infrastructure by changing their fiscal agents. While the Akron Family Services would become the fiscal agent for the program in Akron, the Vocational School would continue to provide adult education services and career development instructors.

These plans reflect the FII programs' success in building an organizational capacity to deliver family literacy services to a target population and to continue the improvement of these services. The outcomes from NCFL's efforts in providing technical assistance and in supporting the FII program staff were well in evidence by the end of Year 2.

Exhibit 6. Plans for Program Services in Year 3

Akron, OH: Akron Vocational School	• For year three, the fiscal agent for the Akron family literacy project will be Akron Family Services, which was awarded a Knight Foundation family literacy grant for 2000-2001. The teachers and the program location will remain the same. • The AVS support will continue for the adult education services and career development instructors.
Barberton, OH: Decker Family Development Center	• Decker is developing structured post-employment services and mentoring for clients after they leave the program.
Boulder, CO: Columbine School	• Multi-component family literacy services at the new site (Sanchez Elementary School) will be implemented during the school year 2000-2001. • Program expects to place some FII students in the internship program that is offered by the Boulder City Schools; program will receive adult education funding. • Boulder Valley School District (Title I program) will be the administrative and fiscal agent for the family literacy grant in year three for both Boulder sites.
Boulder, CO: Family Learning Center	• The Center offered adult education classes during the Summer 2000 in space sponsored by the Housing Authority. • The Center hired a kindergarten teacher to coordinate PACT at each site and organize monthly PACT nights. • The Center donated computers to the Sanchez Elementary School site.
Charlotte, NC: CPCC and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools	• Program is expanding its services in several areas: PACT will include five-year old children; staff will increase their interactions with the business community; and FII services will be implemented at another school site (Sedgefield School) that has Even Start services. • The program will extend its recruitment efforts since the decrease in TANF enrollments and the economy have made it difficult to recruit FII participants.
Long Beach, CA	• The two program sites will continue their family literacy services, and the One Stop Career Transition Center will continue to collaborate with the Burnett School and the Long Beach Adult School.
Philadelphia, PA: Congreso de Latinos Unidos	• The program will strengthen its work focus and offer job retention, career ladder, and post-employment services at the work site. Employers on the Advisory Committee will help to design the curricula. • The FII program director would like to increase the number of staff offering case management. • The Congreso Family Center will continue to provide an after-school program, recreational activities, and summer camp for children. • Other plans for Year 3 are: dissemination of FII program (e.g., via video presentation) and integration of hands-on job training in the curriculum.
Philadelphia, PA: Center for Literacy	• This site will not continue the FII family literacy program.
Philadelphia, PA: Lutheran Settlement House	• In Year 3, the FII program will move to the Welsh School, which is a K-6 facility serving Latino families. The FII program will add: a computer class, a Book Club for parents and children, and more field trips. • LSH will receive a Barbara Bush grant to support infrastructure and ECE. • LSH will further develop the theme-based curriculum and thematic, team-oriented instructional approach that was begun under FII.

IV. Lessons Learned from the FII Experience

The results of our study of the FII programs' activities in developing comprehensive family literacy services for welfare recipients point to a number of lessons about the process of developing an organizational infrastructure for delivering services. These findings also provide insights about the structure of the services that these clients must have in order to move toward economic self-sufficiency. The FII was an ambitious undertaking that required significant planning and technical assistance from NCFL staff, an energetic and committed group of grantees, and an investment by the communities in which the family literacy programs were located. The lessons described below are important not only in planning new initiatives but also in supporting current family literacy services.

Organizational Infrastructure

The FII programs' experiences in organizing the four components of a family literacy service demonstrate the importance of developing a solid organizational infrastructure. Fundamental to the operation of a program are: administrative leadership, qualified staff, adequate facilities, the availability of the target population of clients that are to be served, adequate fiscal resources, and an understanding of the services that are to be delivered. Two lessons from the programs' experiences regarding infrastructure that are somewhat obvious but often not addressed are:

- A complex intervention such as family literacy cannot thrive on a weak organizational base. Early in the development of a program, key administrators must understand the rationale and operational requirements of the program and attend to the core components of the service such as staff, facilities, and funding. Once these components are established, they must be routinely monitored and reinforced; and

- It is important to identify the populations of clients who are to be served so that the services can be targeted to meet the specific needs of these clients. In developing a family literacy program aimed at a specific client population, the availability of this population needs to be confirmed and their particular service needs should be delineated. For family literacy programs focusing on adults who are transitioning from welfare to work, the extent of their prior work experience and their disposition toward work are important characteristics to consider in developing services.

Program Coordination

A key requirement of a successful family literacy program is the staffs' capacity to coordinate services within the program and with external agencies and organizations.

The main premise underlying family literacy is that there is value-added from different components of service working together to address the educational and social needs of the family. The FII programs faced many challenges in coordinating services, and their experiences indicated the following:

- More specific training on developing and sustaining relationships with organizations may be needed. Family literacy staff need guidance on processes for working with other agencies that include: identifying a common goal, specifying the strengths that each entity brings to the relationship, developing ways of monitoring the relationship, and resolving difficulties that arise in the relationship;

- Family literacy staff need assistance in identifying the types of incentives that the primary service provider can offer to collaborating service partners to keep them engaged in the collaboration, such as the types of data that can be shared, the expanded services that will be available to their clients, and successes that can be celebrated; and

- In coordinating the delivery of work preparation services with external agencies, it is important that staff have a strategy for identifying the clients who are ready to participate in activities involving business and training partners. The appropriate placement of clients in work preparation activities will ensure a successful learning experience for the client and an ongoing relationship with business and training partners.

Integration of Services

The main focus of the FII programs' work in integrating services was their incorporation of work preparation activities in the adult education and parent time components. The lessons learned from their experiences are:

- Integration of curricular activities requires that staff have time to plan their activities, meet with their colleagues, and understand the overall instructional content of family literacy. These requirements need to be recognized by the program's administrators and negotiated in the development of the components of service;

- It is critical that staff understand the underlying skills that are being taught through work preparation activities in order to integrate them as part of adult basic skills instruction. The use of work-related applications in teaching basic skills is most effective when the applications are appropriate for the level of skills being taught; and

- In implementing a new model such as work-focused family literacy, it may be helpful if program staff consider strengthening the content and processes of each individual

component of family literacy before moving toward integration across components. Once components of service are organized and the content has been defined, staff may be better able to work together in integrating the content and activities to solidify the overall program.

Overall Family Independence Initiative

Our analyses revealed a number of insights about the development and delivery of family literacy services as well as the implementation of an initiative or demonstration program with multiple grantees. These data suggest the following recommendations:

- Programs with some experience in delivering selected components of family literacy service may require training that takes into account the programs' prior experience, and assists staff in developing a common understanding of the activities involved in a comprehensive family literacy program with integrated components of service;

- Technical assistance is critical when programs do not have all of the core family literacy services in place, need to build infrastructure and staff, or are not experienced in coordinating with staff within their own organization or with other agencies. The technical assistance needs to reinforce the key principles of family literacy programs, recognize and address the difficulty of implementing multiple program changes, and should be delivered throughout the period of the initiative;

- The process of simultaneous personal change may be too difficult for families to undertake who have to address multiple barriers to participation, such as personal, social, economic, and educational issues. Family literacy services to these families may need to be sequenced so that families can develop some stability in personal and social issues before participating fully in all education and parenting services. The length of time that families participate in these services may need to be increased to enable them to benefit fully from a comprehensive array of services; and

- Family literacy programs need additional guidance regarding the collection, interpretation, and use of program and participant data. Staff in these programs generally are not using data to manage the services that they deliver or to reinforce the participation of the clients whom they serve. Additional training and technical assistance could assist the staff in developing ownership of the data, which should result in improving their collection and use of data.

Next Steps

One goal of our process study was to assess the utility of family literacy as a mechanism for enabling welfare recipients to be economically independent and productive family members. This question can be addressed from two perspectives: 1) the feasibility of developing a comprehensive family literacy service that serves welfare recipients or adults transitioning to work, and 2) the extent to which participation in family literacy services is beneficial to welfare recipients.

Development of Family Literacy Services. Our report has provided evidence that it is feasible to develop comprehensive family literacy services for welfare recipients, but that this process takes time, an organizational infrastructure, and a knowledgeable and committed staff. The FII Pilot programs persisted in organizing services that would meet the requirements of a comprehensive model of family literacy and that could address the multiple needs that participants brought to these programs. In undertaking these activities, however, the Pilot program staff found that the process took longer than they had anticipated and required a number of attempts to accomplish what they intended. The FII programs also worked hard to recruit, train, and retain staff who had the skills and knowledge to deliver the varied content of family literacy services. A key challenge that the Pilot staff faced in delivering these services was meeting welfare recipients' multiple needs. At the time of their enrollment in the FII program, many recipients had personal issues that they had to resolve that would pose barriers to both their participation in the program and to employment if not addressed. Some recipients also had low levels of English literacy and basic skills, which would require a significant instructional intervention in order for them to earn a living wage. The range of FII participants' needs at the time of their entry into the program meant that FII staff had to:

- Develop partners that would provide a variety of non-educational services;
- Sequence the delivery of family literacy services so that participants could manage the multi-component intervention; and
- Schedule sufficient time for the delivery of services to meet participants' needs.

Because family literacy is a complex intervention and adults transitioning from welfare to work bring a variety of personal and skill issues to programs, organizations that wish to develop a work-focused family literacy program may need to plan sufficient time and resources to configure each component of service. They also need to consider the particular needs of their target population in scheduling activities and in establishing community and business partners. When these conditions are in place, family literacy is a viable service for adults who would like to enhance their skills as workers and as parents.

Benefits to Welfare Recipients. It is too early to determine the overall the benefits to welfare recipients who participated in the FII work-focused family literacy programs.

The assumption underlying family literacy is that family members will make a number of changes as a result of participating in a family literacy program. Because of the challenges that adults face in making personal changes, it is reasonable to expect that such change would take time. The data that NCFL was able to gather from the FII programs provided a preliminary understanding about the personal and educational benefits that participants can receive by attending a program.

The near-term data that NCFL collected on FII participants indicated that approximately half of the adults who were assessed improved their basic skills. A number of FII participants also reported that they engaged in educational activities with their children and that participation in FII aided them in preparing for work. As the quality of the data collected by family literacy programs improves, it will be more feasible to determine the overall short-term outcomes for participants.

To address the limitations in the FII participant data collection and to understand the long-term outcomes for FII participants, Abt Associates, with support from NCFL, will conduct a follow-up study of the FII participants who received services during the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 program years. Data will be collected from these FII participants one year from the end of each service year. The intent of the follow-up study is to examine the long-term outcomes for FII participants with regard to their employment, development of basic skills, and activities as parents and teachers of their children. The follow-up study will enable us to develop an understanding of families' experiences in using the assistance that they received from the FII programs and the improvements that they were able to make as a result of participation in a comprehensive family literacy program. The results from the follow-up study also will provide insight into participants' perceptions about the value of family literacy as a catalyst for personal and family change.

References

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